
Gonorrhea

“drip” or “clap”

Gonorrhea is a very common sexually transmitted disease (STD). It is caused by germs passed from one person to another during sexual activity, including vaginal, anal, and oral sex. It can also be passed from mother to baby during birth. A person who is infected should be treated immediately. If gonorrhea is not treated, it can cause a type of arthritis or infertility later in life.

Signs and symptoms

Most women with gonorrhea have no symptoms at all. A woman may have a vaginal discharge or a slight burning feeling when urinating. Often this is not noticed because it is so mild. A woman can still infect her partners even if she has no symptoms.

Untreated gonorrhea can cause pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) in women. The germs go deep into the body, causing serious damage to the reproductive system.

In men, the symptoms usually appear 2–8 days after sex. They often have painful urination and pus dripping from the end of the penis. A burning sensation may also be felt. Even if he has no symptoms, a man can still infect his partners.

If a person gets gonorrhea through oral sex, the germs may cause a dry, sore, scratchy throat. Discharge from the rectum and itching are symptoms of anal gonorrhea.

Testing

Many clinics use a urine test or they may test samples of discharge. Because there are different types of gonorrhea, the sample will be tested to find out which medicine is best. People should be tested for chlamydia at the same time, because about half of all people who have gonorrhea also have chlamydia.

Treatment

Your doctor will give you a prescription for antibiotics. They may be in the form of shots or pills. Take all your medicine, even after you start to feel better. It is important to tell your doctor if you are pregnant because he or she might give you a different medicine. All your sex partners must be treated or you will get gonorrhea again.

To prevent blindness in babies, drops are put in the baby's eyes right after birth.

Prevention

- **Know your sex partners**—go with them for STD tests.
- **Use condoms correctly every time you have sex.**
- **Have fewer sex partners.** The more partners you have, the greater your chances of getting gonorrhea.
- **Birth control pills do not prevent infection.**

Learn more about gonorrhea

If you have questions or need more information, contact your doctor, local health department, or community clinic, or call the National STD Hotline at **1-800-227-8922**.

For persons with disabilities this document is available on request in other formats. To submit a request, please call 1-800-525-0127 (TTY/TDD 1-800-833-6388).



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Office of Health Promotion

P.O. Box 47833 Olympia, WA 98504-7833

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